

Attorney's Docket: 2001DE435  
Serial No.: 10/032480  
Response to Office Action mailed 3/10/2004

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1.(Currently Amended) A builder composition obtainable by bringing  
obtained by contacting

- a) crystalline sheetlike sodium silicate of the formula  $\text{NaMSi}_x\text{O}_{2x+1} \cdot y\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ,  
where M is sodium or hydrogen, x is a number from 1.9 to 4 and y is a  
number from 0 to 20,
- b) water and
- c) ~~an acidic,  $\text{H}^+$ -releasing component~~ a sulfuric acid component having a  
releasable  $\text{H}^+$ , where the
- d) molar ratio of the crystalline sheetlike sodium silicate a) to the total  
amount of the releasable  $\text{H}^+$  of the sulfuric acid component c) is 4 : 1 to  
4 000 : 1 15:1 to 550:1 and the
- e) molar ratio of the water b) to the total amount of the releasable  $\text{H}^+$  of  
the ~~acidic~~ sulfuric acid component c) is 3 : 1 to 1 000 : 1,  
into contact with one another, and
- f) heat treating or compacting to provide said builder composition having  
7-21 % by weight of alpha-sodium disilicate, 0 – 12 % by weight of  
beta-sodium disilicate, and 65 – 95 by weight of amorphous fractions,  
said builder composition being essentially free from polymers of acrylic  
acid and maleic acid, cellulose, and surfactant.

2.(Canceled)

3.(Canceled)

4.(Canceled)



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5.(Currently Amended) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one~~ of claim 1, wherein the crystalline sheetlike sodium silicate a) is ~~[[used as]]~~ a powder having an average particle size of from 0.1 to 4 000 µm.

6.(Currently Amended) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one~~ of claim 1, wherein the sulfuric acid acidic component c) is selected from the group consisting of an inorganic sulfuric acid, organic acid, acidic a sulfuric acid salt [[or a mixture ]] and mixtures thereof.

Claims 7-9 .(Canceled)

10.(Currently Amended) The builder composition of claim 1 ~~as claimed in~~ claim-9, wherein the sulfuric acid acidic component c) is sulfuric acid.

11.(Original) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one of claims 1,~~ wherein ~~the composition obtained after bringing components a), b) and c) into~~ contact of claim 1, further comprising grinding, and optionally fractionating to size said builder composition is ground and then optionally fractionated according to size.

12.(Currently Amended) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one~~ of claim 1, wherein ~~the composition obtained after bringing components a), b) and c) into contact is compacted, then ground and then optionally fractionated~~ further comprising grinding and optionally fractionating to size, wherein following said compacting step, the builder composition undergoes grinding, and optionally fractionating to size.



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13.(Currently Amended) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one of claim 1, wherein, after the components a), b) and c) have been brought into contact and/or after compaction and/or after grinding and/or after fractionation according to size, a heat treatment is carried out~~ further comprising grinding and optionally fractionating to size, wherein following said compacting, the builder composition undergoes grinding, and optionally fractionating to size and prior to heat treating.

14.(Currently Amended) The builder composition as claimed in claim 13, ~~wherein, after the components a), b) and c) have been brought into contact, the mixture is firstly heat treated, then compacted, then ground and is then optionally fractionated~~ further comprising grinding and optionally fractionating to size, wherein said builder composition undergoes heat-treating prior to compacting, grinding, and optionally fractionating according to size.

15.(Currently Amended) The builder composition as claimed in claim 13, ~~wherein, after the components a), b) and c) have been brought into contact, the mixture is first compacted, then ground, then optionally fractionated according to size and is then heat treated~~ further comprising grinding and fractionating to size, wherein said compacting occurs prior to said grinding, optionally fractionating to size and heat-treating steps.

16.(Currently Amended) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one of claim 12, wherein the compaction is roll compaction~~ compacting is roll compacting.



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17.(Canceled)

18.(Currently Amended) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one~~ of claim 1, which is a powder having an average particle size of from 0.1 to 4 000  $\mu\text{m}$ .

19.(Currently Amended) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one~~ of claim 1, which is granules having an average particle size of from 200 to 2 000  $\mu\text{m}$ .

20.(Currently Amended) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one~~ of claim 1, which is ground granules having an average particle size of from 0.1 to 300  $\mu\text{m}$ .

21.(Currently Amended) The builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one~~ of claim 1, wherein the builder composition has a dissolution residue of a 0.25% strength aqueous solution at 20°C and after stirring for 20 minutes is less than or equal to 50%.

22.(Currently Amended) A laundry detergent or cleaner comprising at least one builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one of claims~~ claim 1.

23.(Currently Amended) A ~~laundry detergent or cleaner as claimed in~~ claim 22, which is a machine dishwashing detergent comprising the builder composition of claim 1.



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24.(Original) The laundry detergent or cleaner as claimed in claim 23, which comprises:

- a) 0.5 to 98% by weight of the builder composition
- b) optionally 0.5 to 80% by weight of cobuilders
- c) optionally 1 to 50% by weight of interface-active substances
- d) optionally 0.5 to 80% by weight of pH regulators
- e) optionally 1 to 70% by weight of bleaches

25.(Currently Amended) A component of a laundry detergent modular system which comprises 60 to 100% by weight of ~~[[a]]~~ the builder composition as claimed in ~~at least one of~~ claim 1.

26.(Currently Amended) A water softener comprising at least one builder composition ~~as claimed in at least one of~~ claim 1.

27.(Original) The water softener as claimed in claim 26, which comprises

- a) 0.5 to 99% by weight of the builder composition
- b) optionally 0.5 to 80% by weight of cobuilders
- c) optionally 0 to 10% by weight of interface-active substances and
- d) optionally 0.5 to 80% by weight of pH regulators.



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28.(Currently Amended) ~~A laundry detergent or cleaner, water softener or component of a laundry detergent modular system which comprises at least one builder composition as claimed in at least one of claim 1 in the form of a compound comprising:~~

- a) 70 to 99.5% by weight of the builder composition of claim 1, and
- b) 0.5 to 30% by weight of anionic, cationic, nonionic and/or zwitterionic surfactant.

29.(Currently Amended) ~~A laundry detergent or cleaner, water softener or component of a laundry detergent modular system, which comprises at least one builder composition as claimed in at least one of claim 1 in the form of a compound of comprising~~

- a) 50 to 99% by weight of the builder composition of claim 1, and
- b) 0.01 to 10% by weight of dye

30.(Currently Amended) ~~The laundry detergent or cleaner composition or component as claimed in at least one of claim 22, which is in tablet form.~~

31.(New) A process for preparing a builder composition consisting of contacting:

- a) crystalline sheetlike sodium silicate of the formula  $\text{NaMSi}_x\text{O}_{2x+1} \cdot y\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , where M is sodium or hydrogen, x is a number from 1.9 to 4 and y is a number from 0 to 20,
- b) water and
- c) sulfuric acid or salt thereof having a releasable  $\text{H}^+$ ,



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where a molar ratio of the crystalline sheetlike sodium silicate a) to the total amount of the releasable  $H^+$  of the sulfuric acid or salt thereof c) is 15:1 to 550:1 and a molar ratio of the water b) to the total amount of the releasable  $H^+$  of the sulfuric acid component c) is 3 : 1 to 1 000 : 1, and wherein said builder composition undergoes heat treating or compacting, and a step selected from the group consisting of grinding, fractionating to size, and combinations thereof to provide said builder composition having 7-21 % by weight of alpha-sodium disilicate, 0 – 12 % by weight of beta-sodium disilicate, and 65 – 95 by weight of amorphous fractions.